

REMARKS

The present application has been carefully studied and amended in view of the outstanding Office Action dated January 5, 2004, and reconsideration of the rejection of claims 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 23, 24 and 27 is requested in view of the following comments.

Claims 10-21, 23, 24 and 27 are presently pending in this application. Claims 12, 13, 15 and 18-21 have been indicated as directed to allowable subject matter. Claims 12, 13, 15 and 18 have now been rewritten in independent form and allowable claims 19-21 depend from independent claim 18. Claims 12, 13, 15 and 18-21 are now believed to be in condition for formal allowance.

Claim 10 has been amended to further distinguish the present invention from the applied prior art. Claim 10 and remaining dependent claims 11, 14, 16, 17, 23, 24 and 27 are believed to be in condition for allowance, for the reasons expressed below.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present invention defined in claim 10 and the rejected claims that defend therefrom is neither disclosed nor suggested by the prior art particularly Binkley US 5,106,556, for the following reasons.

Binkley does not disclose a flow device comprising at least one duct (18, 20), which is arranged in a region of the outlet of the sediment film from the gap. This flow device is a crucial feature of the invention as it is configured for the transverse approach flow and through flow of the washing liquid transverse to the sediment film with the flow onto and through the film taking place at an acute angle, or preferably, approximately at right angles to the sediment film (page 8, lines 12-14 of the specification). To further differentiate the teachings of Binkley from instant the invention the aforementioned feature of angle between washing liquid and sediment film is recited in claim 10.

In summary, Binkley does not disclose or suggest the configuration of the flow device recited in claim 10 and the rejected dependent claims. Specifically, as recited in these claim, the washing liquid flow from the side adjacent the sediment film leaves the sedimentation chamber and then flows through the sediment film. No such teaching or suggestion is found in Binkley.

Accordingly, for the reasons discussed above it is believed that the rejected claims define an invention which distinguishes over the prior art, particularly Binkley. The application is now believed to be in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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